

## The challenges of the chain

While the downward trends in walleye recruitment and abundance on the Minocqua Chain have not been fully explained, the following factors might have contributed to these declines and could influence the rehabilitation process as well:

- **Low adult density**--Little natural reproduction has occurred since the early 2000s, which has led to adult densities well below their historical levels. Angler and tribal harvest may have also played roles in keeping adult densities low.
- **Changes in the fish community**--Centrarchids (bass/crappie) likely responded to declining walleye levels and appear to be present at higher levels than they were historically. Currently, the Minocqua Chain provides good habitat for centrarchids.
- **Availability of spawning habitat**--Minocqua and Lake Kawaguesaga do not have a large amount of walleye spawning habitat. However, Walleyes For Tomorrow has added rock habitat to enhance walleye spawning areas on Lake Minocqua.



Support Ethical/Responsible Fishing – Report Violations  
Call 1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367)

## Project cooperators



Headwater Basin Chapter of  
Walleyes for Tomorrow

[www.wfthwb.com](http://www.wfthwb.com)



Great Lakes Indian Fish  
and Wildlife Commission

[www.glifwc.org](http://www.glifwc.org)



Wisconsin Department of  
Natural Resources

[www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov)



Lac du Flambeau Band of  
Lake Superior Chippewa  
Indians

[www.ldftribe.com](http://www.ldftribe.com)



Wisconsin Valley  
Improvement Company

[www.wvic.com](http://www.wvic.com)

### Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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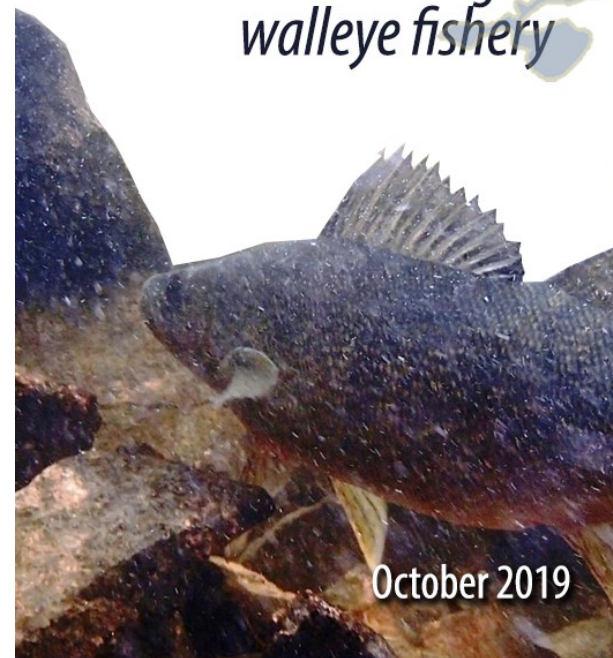
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# The Minocqua Chain Project

*Revitalizing a  
walleye fishery*



October 2019

# The revitalization of the Minocqua Chain walleye fishery

**PROBLEM** The adult walleye population and natural reproduction of the Minocqua Chain of Lakes in Oneida County has experienced a substantial decline since the early 1990s because of low recruitment of young fish into the population.

Adult walleye density (no/acre) in the Minocqua Chain, 1992 - 2019.

Lake	1992	1998	2009	2015	2019
Minocqua	5.6	4.6	2.0	1.0	3.8
Kawaguesaga	4.4	5.2	3.4	1.3	2.6
Tomahawk	2.5	2.5	1.3	0.7	—

WDNR/GLIFWC survey data

**SOLUTION** Implement a cooperative rehabilitation project that seeks to restore healthy, self-sustaining walleye populations. (A density of at least three adult fish per acre in lakes Minocqua and Kawaguesaga, and at least 2 adult fish per acre in Lake Tomahawk).

## Monitoring and stocking the fishery

## What we're doing

- 1 Protecting adult fish** — Increased minimum length limit on walleye from 15" to 18" in 2011. No harvest of walleye from 2015 - 2020. Harvest of 2 walleye 18" or longer beginning in 2020.
- 2 Increasing angler harvest on competing bass** — Removed minimum length limit on bass in 2011 to encourage angler harvest.
- 3 Stocking fish** — Stocked large (7-8 inch) fingerling walleye in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018 in Lake Tomahawk and 2013, 2015 and 2017 in lakes Minocqua and Kawaguesaga. Continue stocking in alternate years after 2019 until natural reproduction can support a self sustaining fishery.



## Stocking: what we've seen to date

- Stocked walleye are starting to show up in the fishery
- Immature fish are showing up in good numbers during fall fisheries surveys.
- Anglers have reported catching the stocked walleye

## Proposed walleye harvest plan

### March 2015 to March 2020:

- **NO HARVEST** on the Minocqua Chain (catch and release only). No tribal walleye harvest.

### March 2020 to March 2025:

- **Limited harvest.** Regulations will depend on the response of the fishery. A conservative 2-bag limit and 18" minimum length limit on walleye will go into effect in 2020. Tribal walleye harvest may occur with appropriate guidelines.

### March 2025 and forward:

- **Sustainable harvest.** Increase from a 2 to 3 bag limit and length limit adjustment based on survey analysis results. Tribal walleye harvest will continue with appropriate guidelines.

NOW

◇ Population estimates ● Fall recruitment ■ WDNR creel ▲ Tomahawk— WDNR Stocking ▲ Minocqua/Kawaguesaga— WDNR Stocking

